

February 27, 2004

**To:** NITC Commissioners  
**From:** Anne Byers  
**Subject:** Community IT Planning and Development Update

**Tri-State Video Conference.** On Feb. 20, participants in the IT Planning and Mini Grant program had the opportunity to share their successes and to learn from nine Minnesota communities participating in a similar program. A representative from Iowa also participated in the videoconference.

**IT Planning and Mini Grant Program Year 1.** Seven out of the eight participants have completed their technology plans. Participants are now working on implementing their plans:

- Edgar received a \$250,000 Community Development Block Grant to build a community center which will include a technology component. They are currently selecting an architect.
- Crawford received a \$150,000 grant from the USDA Rural Utilities Service to provide broadband to the community and to develop a technology learning center. Funds have finally been released so that implementation can begin.
- Broken Bow utilized an intern to redesign the county and chamber Web sites and to work with local businesses. The intern also organized a meeting with Rex Fischer to discuss getting DSL. As a result of the meeting, Broken Bow now has DSL.
- Alliance has offered one-on-one training to area businesses and hosted an e-commerce class for area businesses. The technology committee offered scholarships to those completing the class.
- Brown/Rock/Keya Paha Counties are developing a Web site cataloging available technology-related resources in the area.
- York has completed their plan and has presented it the City Council.
- West Point is installing a videoconferencing system which can be used by area businesses and residents.
- Fillmore County is finishing up their plan and expects to have it completed soon. They are already proceeding on one of their action items—to have Nebraska Online develop a county Web site.

**IT Planning and Mini Grant Program Year 2.** Technology committees in Ord, Maskell, Homer, Dakota City, Lexington, and Hastings have held their initial meetings and are conducting community assessments. Seward will also be joining the program. Their initial meeting has been scheduled for March 18.

**TANgents.** The third issue of TANgents, Technologies Across Nebraska's quarterly newsletter, was published in mid-February and is available at [http://extension.unl.edu/tangents/tangents\\_contents2-04.htm](http://extension.unl.edu/tangents/tangents_contents2-04.htm). TANgents reaches over 1,500 individuals and the distribution list continues to grow. A survey to document the impact of the newsletter will be included in the May issue.

**E-commerce Coordination.** On April 19, providers and potential providers of e-commerce training will meet to discuss how to coordinate efforts to more effectively and efficiently help Nebraska businesses utilize e-commerce in their businesses. The meeting is being co-sponsored by the University of Nebraska Rural Initiative, the Nebraska Rural Development Commission, and the NITC Community Council.

**Publicizing our Efforts.** I have had the opportunity to speak about the IT Planning and Mini Grant Program at the Nebraska Rural Electric Association annual meeting in Kearney in December, Technologies Across Nebraska's meeting in January, and the Fillmore County Development Corporation's annual meeting in February. I met with Patty Wood, the Marketing Director for the Department of Economic Development to discuss ways to mutually publicize our programs. On the national level, I have also continued to post information on TANgents to the Rural Telecommunications Congress distribution list. Lisa Dominisse, Director of the Rural Development Commission, has offered to share information on the IT Planning Workbook with the national rural development partnership.